

Herald Sun

Teen party booze-ban call

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ADULTS must be banned from giving alcohol to other people's under-age teens at parties and at home, experts say.

Psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg has called for tougher laws on the supply of booze to teenagers amid concerns about Australia's binge-drinking epidemic.

Queensland, NSW and Tasmania have adopted tighter restrictions on alcohol to minors on private premises, introducing hefty fines of up to \$6000.

But in Victoria there are no laws prohibiting adults giving grog to under-age teenagers at home - even if they are not the parent or guardian.

Dr Carr-Gregg will turn up the political heat on the issue tonight, calling on Premier John Brumby to close the loophole in Victorian law during a speech at Melbourne High School.

He said there needed to be a legal redress for parents.

"I have clients who for example are absolutely outraged that their children at 13, 14, 15, have gone to a party and the adults there are quite happy to serve them alcohol," he said. "It's quite a major problem here."

A state parliamentary committee last month recommended legislation to make it illegal for anyone other than a parent or guardian to serve alcohol to a minor in private premises.

But at the time, Consumer Affairs Minister Tony Robinson said there was no evidence the law was having "any effect" where it had been introduced.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare figures show 90 per cent of Australians aged 14 years and over have consumed alcohol at some time.

The call for stronger "secondary supply laws" is backed by the Australian Drug Foundation, which has been pushing for the changes.

"I see this as giving parents back some control," said ADF policy manager Geoff Munro. "Half of Australian children under 18 are protected from being given alcohol without parents' approval."

He said the National Health and Medical Research Council advised there was no safe level of alcohol for under-15s.

Burnet Institute research found under-age drinkers were twice as likely to over-indulge when obtaining booze from sources other than parents.